

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 5086

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, MARR, LE, IS, NI
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: NIGERIAN PARTICIPATION IN UNIFIL

REF: USUN NEW YORK 01603 (DTG 220157Z)

1. AIR ATTACHE HAD CONVERSATION 21 APRIL WITH GP CAPT W. I. ALEYIDEINO, NIGERIAN AIR FORCE AIR OFFICER OPERATIONS, THAT SHEDS SOME LIGHT ON NIGERIAN PREPARATIONS FOR UNIFIL AIRLIFT. POINTS THAT EMERGED ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A. GP CAPT FALOPE, NIGERIAN DEFENSE ATTACHE TO USA, IS PRESENTLY IN LAGOS, WHICH EXPLAINS LACK OF CONTACT WITH HIM IN WASHDC.

B. NIGERIANS HAVE COMPLETED PLANS TO DO THE AIRLIFT THEMSELVES, USING NAF C-130'S AND NIGERIA AIRWAYS AIRLINERS.

C. THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN NIGERIAN MISSION TO UN AND LAGOS. ALEYIDEINO HAS NO INSTRUCTIONS AS TO AVAILABILITY OF UN AIRLIFT OR WHETHER OR NOT AIRLIFT WOULD BE REIMBURSABLE IF NIGERIANS WERE TO ACCOMPLISH IT THEMSELVES.

D. THEY ARE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT COST AND
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DIFFICULTY OF AIRLIFTING THEIR CONTINGENT. IT WOULD DEFINITELY TAX THEIR C-130 CAPABILITY. THERE ARE SIX C-130'S AVAILABLE BUT DUE TO CREW SHORTAGE ONLY THREE COULD PROBABLY OPERATE SIMULTANEOUSLY. CREWS WOULD HAV

NO RELIEF. AS OF 20 APRIL TWO OF SIX WERE OPERATIONALLY READY. WE DO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT OTHERS WILL BE READIED

IN TIME. THE USE OF NIGERIA AIRWAYS AIRCRAFT WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY DISRUPT THE ALREADY TAXED NATIONAL AIRLINE.

E. NIGERIA WOULD PROBABLY ACCEPT AIRLIFT OFFER FROM UN. ALEYIDGINO REPEATED HIS REMARK OF 19 APRIL: 'IF THEY (UN) CAN OFFER AIRLIFT, WHY DON'T THEY COME OUT AND DO IT?'

F. NAF HAS NO UN REGULATIONS OR UNDERSTANDING OF HOW AIRLIFT UNDER UN AUSPICES WORKS. (ALCE, REIMBURSEMENT, ETC.)

G. ALEYIDEINO SAID THAT HE FEELS TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR ANY UNSPONSORED EFFORT TO BE LAUNCHED. HE UNDERSTANDS THAT CONTINGENT IS NEEDED SOONEST.

2. BASED ON THIS AND EARLIER CONVERSATIONS THIS WEEK, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE UNIFIL MISSION IF UN-FURNISHED AIRLIFT WERE IMMEDIATELY OFFERED TO FMG. THE DIFFICULTIES FMG FACES IN ACCOMPLISHING AIRLIFT WITH ITS OWN RESOURCES MEAN THAT POTENTIAL FOR INEFFECTIVE OPERATION IS HIGH. EMBARRASSMENT TO FMG IF THIS WERE TO OCCUR WOULD NOT ONLY HAMPER THE UNIFIL MISSION BUT GENERATE RESENTMENT OF BOTH UN AND USG, SINCE WE ARE PERCEIVED HERE AS BEING THE PROBABLE AIRLIFTER.

3. WHEN OFFER IS MADE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS AND RAMIFICATIONS REGARDING REIMBURSEMENT SHOULD BE SPELLED OUT CLEARLY. WE RECOMMEND THAT C-141'S BE USED. ALEYIDEINO ALSO SAID, 'IF THEY SHOW UP WITH C-130'S IT WOULD LOOK RIDICULOUS' (SINCE NIGERIA ALSO HAS C-130'S).
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4. MEANWHILE WE WILL INFORM FMG ASAP THAT WE BELIEVE UN-FOS WILL SOON ASK NIGERIAN MISSION IF IT DESIRES AN AIRLIFT AND, IF SO, WHAT ARE ANSWERS TO SAAM REQUIREMENTS SPELLED OUT IN AFR 76-38.
WYMAN

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